



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

April 5, 2005

News Release

ICE INVESTIGATION LEADS TO THE DISMANTLING OF A GUYANESE-BASED COCAINE IMPORTATION AND DISTRIBUTION RING

NEW YORK- Charges were filed here today against 27 members of a Guyanese-based drug importation and distribution ring that smuggled hundreds of kilograms of cocaine through John F. Kennedy International Airport by concealing the drugs inside of frozen fish and chow mein noodle containers.

The charges were announced jointly by Roslynn R. Mauskopf, United State Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, and Salvatore Dalessandro, Acting Special Agent-in-Charge for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in New York.

The ICE investigation revealed that the New York-based cocaine smuggling ring was responsible for importing hundreds of kilograms of cocaine from Georgetown, Guyana, onboard cargo and passenger flights arriving at John F. Kennedy International Airport in Queens, New York.

ICE federal agents executed search warrants this morning at three locations in the New York metropolitan area resulting in 17 arrests. ICE agents seized approximately one kilogram of powder cocaine, quantities of crack cocaine, a nine-millimeter pistol, drug paraphernalia, and a vehicle containing a "trap," or secret compartment, in which drugs could be hidden during transport.

The individuals arrested today will have their initial appearances this afternoon before United States Magistrate Judge Robert M. Levy, at the U. S. Courthouse, 225 Cadman Plaza East, Brooklyn, New York.

According to the complaint filed today, the smuggling ring used various methods to import large quantities of cocaine through JFK bypassing Customs inspection, including using drug couriers who concealed the cocaine on their persons, and packing the narcotics inside crates of food. As part of their importation scheme, the defendants created shell corporations and listed them as the destinations of the "food" shipments. In one instance, in May 2004, ICE agents intercepted approximately 50 kilograms of cocaine concealed in crates of frozen fish addressed to a bogus

corporation named Eye & Eye Produce, at 795 Flatbush Avenue in Brooklyn, New York. The investigation disclosed that this address in fact belonged to a Chinese restaurant, whose owners were totally unaware that their premises were listed as a destination for cocaine. In a second instance, ICE agents seized more than five kilograms of cocaine concealed in boxes of chow mein noodles, addressed to Impulse Trading Company, another fictitious company with a phony address.

As detailed in the complaint, in Jan. and Feb. 2005, ICE investigators obtained court-authorized wiretaps on the telephones of the organization's ringleader, Sharwin Lilly. The wiretaps revealed that Lilly directed the operations of an international organization, relying on cocaine suppliers based in Guyana to regularly import multi-kilogram shipments of cocaine through JFK Airport. The wiretaps further revealed that in New York Lilly had a network of drug distributors, spanning from New York to Virginia.

According to the complaint, Kent Bryan and Wanda Deloach recruited drug couriers. Lennox Hobbs was primarily responsible for the creation of the shell corporations. Michael Browne and Hubert Clarke supplied much of the ring's cocaine, and Rochelle Marcus served as the drug ring's bookkeeper. Derrick Walters was an intermediary between Lilly and many of his Guyanese suppliers. Derrick Barton, Timothy McKenzie, Christopher West and Kenneth Wong were distributors for the ring. Rawle Hoyte, Terrell Lassiter, Jermaine Nicholson, and Michael Reid purchased the cocaine for resale.

"There's no limit to what criminal smuggling organizations will do for profit - whether it's drugs, weapons or illegal aliens, these organizations will try to smuggle any commodity if the price is right," said Dalessandro. "ICE is targeting these organizations and shutting down the vulnerabilities they might exploit to smuggle their criminal goods into the United States. With these arrests, ICE has dismantled an entire criminal network, which is a tremendous public safety benefit for the city."

"This case shows the broad net that we cast in our continued commitment to prosecute anyone who smuggles drugs across our nation's borders," stated United States Attorney Mauskopf. "We are relentless in our efforts to stop those who would flood the streets of our communities with poison."

Ms. Mauskopf emphasized that the investigation is continuing.

Each of the defendants is charged with conspiracy to distribute and possess with the intent to distribute more than five kilograms of a cocaine. If convicted, each faces a maximum sentence of life imprisonment, a minimum sentence of 10 years' imprisonment, and a \$4 million fine.

Assistant United States Attorneys Michael Ramos and Roger Burlingame are handling the prosecution of the cases.

The Defendants:

Name: SHARWIN LILLY, also known as "Nigel Chester" and "Huey"

D.O.B.: 01/28/1970

Residence: 241 East 42nd Street, Brooklyn, New York

Name: KENT BRYAN, also known as "Rupaul"

D.O.B.: 11/11/1973

Residence: Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Name: DERRICK BARTON

D.O.B.: 04/17/1960

Residence: Far Rockaway, New York

Name: MICHAEL BROWNE

D.O.B.: 05/24/1959

Residence: 572 East 26th Street, Brooklyn, New York

Name: LESLYN CAMACHO

D.O.B.: 09/10/1966

Name: HUBERT CLARKE, also known as "Dun Dun"

D.O.B.: 12/18/1974

Residence: Guyana

Name: WANDA DELOACH

D.O.B.: 10/07/1966

Residence: East Orange, New Jersey

Name: LENNOX HOBBS, also known as "Junior" and "Ronald Davis"

D.O.B.: 09/23/1973

Residence: Brooklyn, New York

Name: RAWLE HOYTE

D.O.B.: 01/14/1972

Residence: Manhattan, New York

Name: TERRELL LASSITER

D.O.B.: 04/18/1971

Residence: 1003 Atlantic Drive, Virginia Beach, Virginia

Name: ROCHELLE MARCUS

D.O.B.: 02/22/1974

Residence: 572 East 26th Street, Brooklyn, New York

Name: TIMOTHY MCKENZIE, also known as "Spliff"

Name: SHELLY MCQUNE

D.O.B.: 10/07/1970

Residence: 360 Fenimore Street, Brooklyn, New York

Name: JERMAINE NICHOLSON

Name: MICHAEL REID

D.O.B.: 07/07/1977

Residence: Amityville, New York

Name: TABESSA RODNEY

D.O.B.: 05/07/1972

Residence: Brooklyn, New York

Name: RUEL SANDY

D.O.B.: 07/09/1983

Name: SHAMIKA TAYLOR

D.O.B.: 08/13/1981

Residence: Brooklyn, New York

Name: DERRICK WALTERS, also known as "Patrick Obermuller"

D.O.B.: 03/17/1952

Name: CHRISTOPHER WEST, also known as "Tony"

D.O.B.: 06/13/1970

Residence: 241 East 42nd Street, Brooklyn, New York

Name: KENNETH WONG, also known as "Pops,"

D.O.B.: 05/22/1973

Residence: 366 East 29th Street, Brooklyn, New York

Name: "CHUBBY" LNU

Name: "FREDDY" LNU

Name: "GARFIELD" LNU

Name: "MOSES" LNU

Name: FNU LNU, also known as "Winsome Housen"

Name: FNU LNU-2, also known as "Joel Hernandez"

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.